

**California Department of Health Services, Office of AIDS (CDHS/OA)
HIV Education and Prevention Services Branch
Request for Applications, Number 2007-03
Statewide HIV/AIDS/STD Education and Prevention Programs**

***HIV Prevention for Injection Drug Users in California:
Syringe Exchange Programs***

Responses to Questions from Applicant Teleconferences

Please note that there was a copying error in the Request for Applications (RFA) that was distributed through the mail (the error was not in the online version of the RFA). Inadvertently included in this packet of information was a Scope of Work (SOW) from the Contra Costa County Education and Prevention Program. This SOW was enclosed between Attachments 6 and 7 of the appendix section. Although the SOW contains no confidential information, the CDHS/OA requests that recipients remove and destroy the SOW so that no further confusion will arise from this oversight.

Question: Since the first fiscal year (FY) is shortened, what dates should applicants refer to in the budget, program description, and timeline sections of their applications?

Response: Dates should reflect a plan to begin activities for the first FY on September 1, 2007. FY 1 will be September 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008. FY 2 is July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009, FY 3 is July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010.

Question: The RFA makes the same amount of funding available for the first FY as for the other two years of the contract, even though the first FY is shorter. Is this correct?

Response: Yes. Your application should reflect how the shortened time period will affect your plan.

Question: The most difficult is figuring out how the Scope of Work should be detailed. What does OA want here?

*Response: The application should **not** include a formal Scope of Work. The SOW that was included in the appendix section was included in error (see note above). After contracts are awarded, recipient agencies will receive detailed instructions on how to submit a SOW.*

Question: Can an organization reply to the RFA that did not receive the original invitation to apply from OA?

Response: Yes, as long as they meet the other qualifications to apply.

Question: Can we include letters of support?

Response: Letters of support are not necessary. If you would like to include them, you may include them in the appendices.

Question: Does OA already have an evaluation model, and if so, are there parameters that OA can share with the applicants?

Response: We do not have an evaluation model, because this RFA represents the first time OA has provided direct funding to syringe exchange programs (SEPs). An evaluation model will be developed during the contract period and provided to agencies that are awarded contracts under the RFA. Training will be provided to agency staff in using the evaluation instruments.

Question: If OA will be developing an evaluation, should our applications focus more on our program goals?

Response: Yes. The evaluation section of your application should outline your goals, objectives and activities, and how you will measure the success of these activities in meeting your goals.

Question: Will programs need to alter their evaluation component once OA develops one?

Response: The OA evaluation should complement evaluation activities undertaken by the contracted agencies. However, contracted agencies will be expected to meet minimum evaluation expectations developed by OA; this may require modification of agency plans.

Question: On page 4, it states, "Participation in CDHS/OA/s online evaluation program will be required". Is this a reference to ELI [Evaluating Local Interventions, OA's current online evaluation program]?

Response: Yes. It is not named in the RFA because the new system, which is currently under development, has not as yet been fully developed.

Question: How will the state look at new programs versus well established programs?

Response: We have no criteria setting the two apart.

Question: On page 1 of the application it states that SEPs with budgets under \$200,000 are especially encouraged to apply. Does that mean that agencies with budgets under \$200,000 will receive preference in the review process?

Response: Agencies with budgets under \$200,000 are encouraged to apply, but their applications will not be scored by different criteria.

Question: The RFA specifies font size and margin requirements. However, it does not specify whether the document is required to be single- or double-spaced. Is there a requirement to this or is this at the applicants' discretion?

Response: The application should be single spaced.

Question: Attachments #1 and #4 are in Adobe. Can they be submitted in WORD?

Response: Yes.

Question: We have the letter of intent limited to one page; can we put contacts on a second page?

Response: Yes.

Question: Is it possible to use some of the funds to purchase a vehicle?

Response: Yes.

Question: Can we use the money to maintain salaries of existing staff?

Response: Yes, but keep in mind that the goals of the RFA are to expand access to sterile syringes, and to add ancillary services to existing programs that will enhance the health and wellness of IDUs.

Question: What about facilities? Is it appropriate to use the funds for maintaining current facilities?

Response: Facility operation should be listed under Operating Expenses. Facility leasing or rent is an allowable cost, and must include cost per square foot of property that will be in use under this contract.

Question: In agencies with no indirect costs, can we include in indirect costs a line item that is also included somewhere else in the budget?

Response: Nowhere in the budget should the same item be listed more than once. Most agencies contracted will have indirect costs associated with the program. Indirect costs are those that accrue in the normal conduct of business that can only be partially attributable to performance of a contract (e.g., administrative expenses such as payroll handling, accounting, janitorial services, monthly parking fees, utilities, insurance, etc.). Normally, these costs may be calculated as a percentage of direct expenses or as a percentage of personnel costs. For this RFA, indirect costs may be calculated at no more than 15% of personnel costs.

Question: If it's possible that an agency's MOU may be for only one year, how should that be reflected in the application?

Response: The application should be written based on the assumption that the MOU will be in place for the full three years.

Question: If MOUs do not require financial responsibilities, are MOUs still required?

Response: Yes.

Question: If the agency has a fiscal agent, do we include the financial report from the agent? What other information is needed regarding the fiscal agent?

Response: Yes. Complete contact information for the fiscal agent should also be provided, as the official state contract would be with the fiscal agent.

Question: The timeline has no page limits--what exactly is OA looking for?

Response: The timeline has no page limits due to the fact that different applicants format their timelines differently; some provide this information in a table or spreadsheet. It is up to the individual applicant to decide how much detail to provide.

Question: One of the goals of the RFA is to “strengthen the statewide network of service providers who address the needs of IDUs.” How would OA like to see that goal reflected in the application?

Response: This is a goal for Office of AIDS to achieve through statewide funding, rather than a goal for individual applicants to meet.

Question: Would OA like the Executive Summary to be program specific or address overall capacity of the parent agency?

Response: Wherever agency capacity is addressed, whether in the “Agency Capacity” section or the Executive Summary, the applicant should highlight how the agency’s pool of skills and resources will support the program activities outlined. In some cases, that will mean emphasizing the capacity of the parent agency, in other cases that will mean highlighting the abilities and achievements of the department or program that will conduct the activities.

Please note that the Harm Reduction Coalition (HRC) is providing technical assistance to applicants. A full-day training in grant writing will be conducted on April 26 at HRC’s offices in Oakland. For more information, contact Rachel Robinson at (510) 444-6969 x13, or robinson@harmreduction.org.